

# NEW HORIZONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

## SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

July-December 2000

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## **SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT JULY-DECEMBER 2000**

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
I. Executive Summary	1
II. Introduction	4
• Background	4
• Expected Results	5
III. Principal Activities Undertaken During the Report Period	6
▪ Strategic Objective: Increased literacy and numeracy among targeted Jamaican youth	7
▪ Intermediate Result 4.1: Improved teacher quality	10
▪ Intermediate Result 4.2: Increased school attendance	12
▪ Intermediate Result 4.3: Improved management of schools	13
IV. Performance Charts	16
V. Problems Encountered	20
VI. Statement of Work	21
VII. Appendix	24

▪ Reference List: Products/Deliverables	23
▪ Semi-Annual Financial Status Report	24



## NHP SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT: July – December 2000

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document describes the activities and accomplishments of the New Horizons for Primary Schools (NHP) Activity during July – December 2000. NHP has the objective to enhance the performance of Jamaican primary school students in numeracy and literacy. The focus is on those children who, because of poverty and other disabling conditions, have had little academic success in school. Increased academic success is to be accomplished through the development of model interventions in 72 schools that, when tested, can be used to improve the performance of low-achieving children throughout Jamaica.

The major activities conducted during the six-month report period included a set that extended across all ten project interventions. These are summarized in reference to the Intermediate Results (IRs) of the USAID/Jamaica Mission Results Framework under each of the NHP interventions:

- **Intervention #1:** Development of Innovative Math and Reading Programs. (IR4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** Principals were further oriented to the strategies of NHP and their role as leaders in school reform under the project. They were instructed in the transformation of School Development Plans to annual “Action Plans” and further guided on the involvement of the School Development Teams and Resource Teachers in the planning and implementation of meaningful school-based activities intended to institutionalize innovative programs in numeracy and literacy for more child-centered teaching. This was accomplished in part by the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) in collaboration with the MOEC through a Principals’ Forum as well as school-based training activities during the period. The annual planning done by the PIU and its principal partners, the Professional Development Unit (PDU) and National Council on Education (NCE), contributed to greater effectiveness in the area of *Improved Quality of Teaching* and within the other Intermediate Results under Strategic Objective 4 of the Mission Results Framework.

- **Intervention #2:** Teacher In-service Training. (IR4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** Collaboration with the PDU and other units within the MOEC took place in implementing the revised primary curriculum in the project schools while intensifying the scope and intensity of PIU site-based training activities so as to assure evermore effective approaches to child-centered learning. This preparation and the design and implementation of a monitoring plan to enhance site-based technical assistance under a substantially revised strategy ensure improved results. The “bottoms-up”

approach to improved literacy and numeracy was enhanced through involvement of the 156 trained Mathematics and Literacy Resource Teachers in the school-based planning, implementation of “in-house” workshops and other improvement initiatives at each of the 72 project schools. Under the “PIU Site-Based Technical Support Strategy” initiated in September 2000 and conducted through the end of the report period, December 2000, over 200 classroom teachers were observed and provided clinical feedback with over 250 principals, vice principals and resource teachers advised as to school-specific approaches to improving the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

- **Intervention #3:** Governance and Leadership Training. (IR 4.3 *Improved Management of Project Schools*)

**Accomplishments:** The local consultant hired through Juarez and Associates conducted activities under the National Council on Education that are intended to produce an “Operations Manual on Governance and Leadership of School Boards” and modules on topics in governance and leadership training. These produces are scheduled by the NCE for a later date.

- **Intervention #4:** Parent Training. (IR 4.2 *Improved School Attendance*)

**Accomplishments:** The local consultant hired through Juarez and Associates conducted activities under the National Council on Education to plan and implement workshops to train 44 Parent Training Coordinators from seven NHP school clusters in order for them to eventually serve as guides in the establishment of Study Circles.

- **Intervention #5:** Health and Nutrition. (IR 4.2 *Improved School Attendance*)

**Accomplishment:** The NHP-supported breakfast programs in the eight project schools were in place early in the new school year 2000-2001, serving 8,800 breakfasts over 73 days with an average of 430 needy students participating. The Nutrition Specialist submitted a status report on the program during the period, covering progress, concerns and recommendations for improvement in such areas as record keeping and incentive activities designed to increase attendance and participation of some of the neediest children in the pilot schools.

- **Intervention #6:** Supplementary Materials. (IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** A total of over 4000 enriching supplementary materials that had been identified for all project schools based on research and appraisals by the PIU technical team with inputs from an array of other educators were procured and arrived at the NHP office in December 2000. An additional 28,000 new books were donated by the International Book Program as a result of close collaboration between the J&A Home Office and the PIU team. All these books are to be distributed in February 2001.

- **Intervention #7:** Educational Technology. (IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishments:** A thorough review of the means of accomplishing the intended outcomes of this intervention was completed by the PIU during the report period. As a result of this activity which involved a broad base of NHP stakeholders, the contractor submitted the modified **Revised Educational Technology Plan: December 2000** and a detailed cover letter to the MOEC for proper approval. Once the Ministry authorities concur with the recommendations set forth in the plan, J&A will submit a contract modification to USAID for its approval.

- **Intervention #8:** Training of Resource Teachers. (IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*)

**Accomplishment:** The PIU collaborated with the Professional Development Unit in the area of Literacy and Mathematics Resource Teacher training by providing assistance in the planning and implementation of workshops for training “Facilitators” and the Resource Teachers as well. The production of a wide array of classroom teaching resource materials resulted; among others, is a “Menu of Instructional Strategies” compiled by the PIU Literacy Specialists.

- **Intervention #9:** Linking MOEC Data Bases and **Intervention #10:** Linking Project School to EMIS Network. (IR 4.3 *Improved Management of Schools*)

**Accomplishments:** The Project Director, in close collaboration with the Subcontractor, IDEAS, Ltd, members of the Planning Unit, and Directors of the Regional Offices, completed the search and screening for EMIS Technician/Trainers. Six were identified for employment by J&A and they are to be assigned to each of the six Regional Offices. One is to serve as the NHP EMIS Technician/Trainer Coordinator while working out of one of the Regional Offices. A scope of work was completed for the subcontractor’s EMIS Specialist to complete the customized school management software that was put on due to the austerity budget constraints. The specialist will also conduct the training of the technician/trainers who, in turn, will install the software in the NHP sites, train principals and others on site, while assisting with the entry of school census and other relevant data at each project school.

The major problems experienced during the report period included those associated with the obligation of adequate funds in a manner whereby the amount of effort would match proposed plans in some areas, particularly Intervention 6, Supplementary Materials in Mathematics and Reading, and Intervention 7, Educational Technology. The lack of responsiveness on the part of some school principals in terms of exerting leadership in school reform and satisfying minimal requirement is also perceived as critical enough to merit special attention during the period and in the immediate future.

## INTRODUCTION

This document describes the activities and accomplishments of the New Horizons for Primary Schools (NHP) Activity during July to December 2000. NHP has the objective to enhance the performance of Jamaican primary school students in numeracy and literacy. The focus is on those children who, because of poverty and other disabling conditions, have had little academic success in school. Increased academic success is to be accomplished through the development of model interventions in 72 schools that, when tested, can be used to improve the performance of low-achieving children throughout Jamaica. Following a brief description of the New Horizons Project, the overall expected results of the New Horizons activity are presented. The subsequent section makes up the bulk of the report and consists of a narrative description of the principal activities carried out during the reporting period. A section follows this on “Performance” that presents the activities, products generated from the activities, and outcomes of specific activities in tabular format. The next section discusses the problems encountered in project implementation and steps taken to resolve such problems. Activities to be completed during the upcoming reporting period are briefly described in the final section under “Statement of Work”. All sections of the report are organized in terms of the Strategic Objective (SO) and the Intermediate Results (IRs) to which NHP responds. Specific lower level results are discussed in the narratives, as appropriate. The Appendix includes a list of all deliverables and other products submitted to the CTO at USAID from July to December 2000. (These are available upon request.) A financial status report for the period makes up the second section of the Appendix.

This semi-annual report is tied closely to the USAID/Jamaica Mission Results Framework and is consistent with USAID guidelines.

### **Background**

New Horizons for Primary Schools is currently at the midpoint of the third year of a five-year effort. The NHP is designed to improve student performance in grades 1-6 through employing a series of interrelated interventions that work in concert to change not only the learning experiences of children in the classroom, but the broader enabling environment of the school and community. NHP is funded by USAID Jamaica and the overall project is a seven-year effort. NHP is being conducted under Juárez and Associates, Inc. in collaboration with IDEAS, Ltd.

NHP is working in partnership with the Jamaican Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) and other members of the Jamaican education community to bring about changes in schools and classrooms that result in individual students having greater academic success in primary school. The strategic vision of NHP is to use a holistic, “bottoms up” approach to equip local communities, school principals, and teachers to improve local school policies, decision-making, and educational practice in favor of better quality learning for all children.



NHP supports the USAID/Jamaica strategic objective of *Increased literacy and numeracy among targeted Jamaican youth*. The NHP objectives of building capacity to both manage educational reform at the local level and to improve instructional practice and student learning in the classroom directly support several Intermediate Results. These are: IR 4.1 *Improved Quality of Teaching*; IR 4.2 *Increased School Attendance*; and IR 4.3 *Improved Management of Schools*. The SO is supported through the implementation of ten interrelated interventions: Developing innovative mathematics and literacy programs; providing in-service teacher training in reading and mathematics; providing governance and leadership training for schools, communities and parents; offering parent education and training; selective facilitating of health and nutrition activities; providing supplementary reading and mathematics materials; training teachers in educational technology; training resource teachers; integrating databases; and linking schools with the Jamaican regional and national EMIS system.

### **Expected Results**

New Horizons furthers the Strategic Objective by achieving eleven expected results. These results span the ten interventions and can be summarized as follows:

- Marked improvement in reading and numeracy performance among primary school students
- Innovative curricula and materials, which meet the needs of individual schools
- Classroom and resource teachers trained in the latest instructional approaches for reading and mathematics, educational technology (including computer assisted instruction and educational media resources)
- Modernized school management
- Exposure of teachers, students, and communities to educational technology and information systems
- Breakfast and nutritional education programs instituted in a number of project schools
- Empowerment of school boards and parent/teacher organizations
- Greater professionalism of teachers
- Increased attendance and academic promotion
- Jamaican youth prepared for the technologically oriented marketplace
- Increased community and private sector involvement in support of schools

Prior to the previous reporting period, NHP supported the development of training activities for the implementation of the revised primary curriculum by working in close collaboration with the Core Curriculum Unit, the Professional Development Unit and others within the Ministry of Education and Culture. This included the development of action plans for the delivery and utilization of the revised curriculum and instructional materials such as those received by the Media Services Unit. NHP reports from previous periods served to guide the PIU in the design and implementation of teacher training activities to provide effective instruction in numeracy and

literacy, especially among the neediest of project schools. Site-based and cluster workshops ranged from selecting literacy activities from the curriculum to match reading skills in comprehension; teaching students to formulate questions, evaluating the difficulties students encounter in reading comprehension, among others. In mathematics, areas reviewed included the teaching of algebra across the grades, the use of calculators across the curriculum, and others. In the previous period, school specific literacy and numeracy programs were developed as key components of the school development plans. In addition, advances were made in the revision of the NHP plans in the area of educational technology and a breakfast program was initiated in eight project schools. Administrative computers were successfully delivered to all six Regional Offices as well as 66 of the 72 project schools. The PIU professional team has also assisted partners from the MOEC Professional Development Unit in developing and implementing training plans for 156 resource teachers. Support was provided the National Council on Education in contracting consultants to write manuals and developed and implemented training plans for both school/community leaders and parents. During the final weeks of the previous six-month period, a **Year 2000 Project Performance** report was completed by the J&A Formative Evaluation Team on the basis of the **Performance and Monitoring Plan** (May 1999) that served to inform the NHP of its strengths and areas for improvement. This helped lay the foundation for a June 2000 First NHP Annual Retreat and the **New Horizons for Primary Schools Annual Plan 2000-2001** completed in a collaborative manner early in the fifth report period.

## PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN DURING THE REPORT PERIOD, JULY – DECEMBER 2000

**Strategic Objective:** *Increased literacy and numeracy among targeted Jamaican youth.*

**Development of NHP Year Three Workplan.** The Institutional Contractor developed a workplan for July 2000 to June 2001 based on the **Life of Project Workplan**, Year 2000 project performance findings, and the experiences of the previous year. The annual workplan was completed as required and has been serving as a guide to the implementation of NHP activities for the current year. A second version containing itemized cost projections was also submitted. A third, expanded version was developed during the report period in order to respond to a need expressed by stakeholders to see the J&A workplan in perspective with those of project partners. This was done in concert with NHP partners in the Professional Development Unit who are in charge of Intervention 8 (Mathematics and Literacy Resource Teacher Training) and the National Council on Education in charge of Interventions 3 and 4 (Governance and Leadership Training for School/Community Leaders and Parent Education and Training, respectively). This series of planning exercises resulted in the reinforcement of total-project efforts to further the cause of improved numeracy and literacy among the approximated 29,000 children in the 72 NHP schools.

**Collaboration with MOEC in Implementation of Revised Primary Curriculum.** The NHP activities are to complement the Revised Primary Curriculum by focusing on those children who, because of poverty or other disabling conditions have had little success in school. Thus, it is important to work closely with the Core Curriculum Unit in implementing the curriculum in NHP schools in order to ensure that the base is in place for the innovative mathematics and literacy programs being developed by the project. To this end, PIU subject-matter specialists provided input in their areas of specialization to several MOEC activities during the report period. These included: Literacy Summer (2000) Camps, on a Ministry-wide planning and training basis as they pertained to NHP schools; participation in teacher training especially on site by fostering the use of the revised curriculum to foster child-centered learning activities, and attendance of meetings and forums related to the MOEC “Literacy Initiative.” Many of these activities were a continuation of and further in-depth follow-up to those collaborative activities conducted during the previous school year.

**Conduct of NHP Principals’ Forum.** An annual gathering of the seventy-two (72) NHP school principals took place near the beginning of the 2000-2001 School Year. The experiences of stakeholders at various levels during the previous school year and the findings of the Formative Evaluation Team referred to above provided ample data for the design of the fall 2000 training session with principals. The one-day forum covered three main objectives: (1) *To effectively articulate the purposes, fundamental principles, activities and intended outcomes of New Horizons for Primary Schools for the year 2000-2001;* (2) *To describe the role of the*

*principal as a leader of school reform under NHP, and (3) To formulate the overall strategy and specific plans for improved Numeracy and Literacy at the individual school/community level.* Each of these objectives was formulated on the basis of the findings of the end-of-year formative evaluation and the direct observations and experiences of school principals, members of the Project Implementation Unit, and other stakeholders. In brief, the first objective (# 1) addressed the need to further reinforce each principal's ability to articulate the general goals, mission, philosophy and approaches of New Horizons while providing in-depth knowledge about the intended outcomes, plans, concerns and approaches to be used throughout the year 2000-2001. It should be noted that this first objective was especially important for the several new principals who were beginning their duties at that time. The second objective of the forum (# 2) focuses on a theme that has been common to all group and individual technical assistance provided by the NHP to school principals. It was the intent of the designers of the Year 2000 NHP Principals' Forum that each and every item on the program agenda be conducted in such a way so as to further enhance each principal's ability to serve as an informed and skilled leader of school reform under New Horizons. The third objective (# 3) was to serve as the "bridge" between the learning acquired by the principals at the forum and the real world of refining and implementing an individualized, customized School Development Plan (SDP) at each of the schools in the NHP "holistic" and "bottom-up" approach to instructional reform and improved performance in mathematics and literacy for the students within the project schools.

**Designed a Monitoring Plan to Assist in the Supervision of Site-based Technical Assistance.** The New Horizons for Primary Schools Site-Based Technical Support Strategy for the year 2000-2001 was designed to sustain and inspire the bold attempt of the project to reform literacy and numeracy instruction in seventy two (72) schools across Jamaica resulting in significant improvement of student performance significantly in these two curriculum areas. The project adopted a holistic approach, providing for the empowerment of schools and communities through participation at the local level. With School Development Teams (SDTs) in place and School Development Plans (SDPs) formulated to guide this customized, ground-up approach, the Project Implementation Unit advanced into its second year of providing site-based technical support. It was decided that major modifications were to be incorporated within the strategy to be employed during the current year. In the previous 1999-2000 school year, the training program had included those elements of numeracy and literacy, identified through the teacher- and school-specific needs assessment conducted by the PIU during the Spring and Fall of 1999. In order to address these assessed needs, cluster-based and site-based technical support were implemented as the major methods of the content delivery system. Owing to the extensive nature of the task in covering the 72 schools over the past year, priority was given to those schools and teachers determined to have the greatest needs. While this approach was considered appropriate for year 1999-2000, a more extensive, "bottom-up" strategy focusing on improved quality teaching and child-centered learning was required in order to achieve the strategic objective of the project. In response to the findings of the formative evaluation, the PIU site-based technical support strategy for the year 2000-2001 was implemented, empowering the project school teachers to perform more efficiently and effectively, not only during the implementation of current project activities, but thereafter. Accordingly, the strategy has been engaged in continued deployment of the Literacy and Mathematics Resource Teachers as a means of strengthening the process of improving literacy and numeracy performance.

As of September 2000, the PIU Specialists and Project Director have been conducting school-based visits designed to collaborate with the resource teachers in improving the individual literacy and numeracy programs along with the quality of teaching. This is being done in coordination with the principal at each school. Given the allocation of particular project schools to each PIU Specialist and Project Director, it is anticipated that each school will benefit from approximately four visitations for the academic year 2000-2001. The first round of visit conducted during the report period served a three-fold purpose: (1) to continue and sustain the technical assistant support provided by PIU personnel; (2) to reinforce the role of Literacy and Mathematics Resource Teachers, and (3) to observe teacher and student performance in a selected number of classrooms in order to assist in further assessing and addressing needs. The observation of teacher and student behaviors was conducted within the context of the project's *Results Framework* performance criteria. Accordingly, the assessment criteria which constitute the *Observation Checklist*, used in the first round of visits, addressed the following seven components: (1) *Improved Quality of Teaching*, (2) *Improved Teaching Skill*, (3) *Improved Teacher Knowledge of Subject Matter* (4) *Professional Development Program*, (5) *Improved Instructional Materials*, (6) *Increased School attendance* and (7) *Special Incentive Program Implemented*. The related performance *Indicators* and their *Descriptors* were specified to all involved.

All 72 NHP schools were visited during this first round. Altogether, 209 classrooms were observed and provided with feedback, and 150 resource teachers were consulted. The second and subsequent rounds of visits for this school year have been focusing on continued collaborative work with the Resource Teachers, aimed at sustaining improvement in the quality of classroom teaching and learning. Toward this end, the Mathematics and Literacy Resource Teachers in the project schools have been expected to be actively involved in the improvement initiatives during, and subsequent to, each site visit. PIU Specialists and the Project Director, as providers of the technical assistance to this process, have been engaged in the following activities: collaborating with the resource teachers in promoting improved teaching skills; providing feedback to classroom teachers; and, modeling instructional strategies. The five major approaches to the PIU site-based technical support strategy being implemented since September 2000 incorporate (1) Clinical Supervisory Practices, (2) Demonstration Teaching, (3) Utilization of Teacher Portfolios, (4) Intra- and Inter-school Classroom Observations, and (5) Sharing of "Best" (Effective) Practices. (These are referred to in a subsequent section of this report.) In order to more effectively oversee the monitoring process, a large school-by-school monitoring chart was designed and placed on the NHP office wall. It is being utilized by the PIU Specialists, PDU Training Coordinator, NCE Project Implementation Officer, Core Curriculum Unit colleagues and others to assure improved project effectiveness.

**Reporting on the Status of PIU Site-based Technical Assistance.** The PIU prepared a status report on the implementation of the site-based technical support during the report period. The report, in turn, is serving as a basis for developing more specific approaches and programs within individual schools and across the project as a whole. As reported on immediately above, decisions taken by the PIU during July and August 2000 led to the design of the technical assistance strategy to be implemented in the new school year.

This, as described, encompassed five major approaches: Clinical Supervisory Practices, Demonstration Teaching, Introduction of Teacher Portfolios for Professional Development Purposes, Intra- and Inter-school Classroom Observations Among NHP Teachers, and Sharing of “Best Practices” Identified in the Teaching of Reading and Mathematics. In the period from September to December 2000, all schools were visited once, some twice and, in exceptional cases, more than twice. The status report provides a description of the activities that took place, summaries of relevant data that were collected during the visits, and related commentaries. In the report period, the actual number of school visits exceeds 120, over 400 classrooms were observed and at least 120 teachers were involved in clinical supervisory practices with the PIU Specialists and Project Director. A total of 258 principals, vice principals and resource teachers were advised under the technical support strategy. The accomplishments under this site-based approach during the period took a total of over 650 man-hours in the schools on the part of the PIU. The status report provides concluding remarks that are assisting the PIU to further refine its site-based approaches for improved numeracy and literacy within the targeted schools.

**Development of School Specific Literacy and Mathematics Innovative Programs.** Based on the results of the previous school year and the need to more sharply focus on child-centered numeracy and literacy programs in each of the 72 project schools, NHP principals were instructed by the project director in August 2000 to convene their School Development Teams so as to review and update the School Development Plans. This was to result in a Year 2000-2001 “Action Plan” at each school within which detailed needs, objectives, activities and corresponding resources and responsible persons were to be identified. This was reinforced during school visits as of mid-September and at the October Principals’ Forum. Revised SDPs in the form of action plans are being received and reviewed by the PIU team members as another means of providing guidance in the implementation of individualized innovative programs in mathematics and literacy.

#### ***Intermediate Result 4.1: Improved Teacher Quality***

**Collaboration with PDU in the Training of Mathematics and Literacy Resource Teachers.** In addition to the Project Implementation Unit site-based technical assistance efforts described above under the Strategic Objective section, the PIU collaborated in the area of Literacy and Mathematics Resource Teacher training with the NHP Training Coordinator assigned to the Professional Development Unit. In previous periods, the PIU Specialists collaborated with the PDU in the development of selection criteria and identification of candidates for resource teachers in mathematics and reading. The PIU team also reviewed and synchronization of the Life of Project plan and the PDU five-year work plan in terms of recruitment, selection and placement of resource teachers in former period. During the current report period, PIU members, along with Education Officers from the Core Curriculum Unit, assisted the PDU in the development of training plans for workshops for “Facilitators” of the training of Resource Teachers and for the Resource Teachers as well. In August 2000, the PIU collaborated in the implementation of workshops for experienced Facilitators and the professional development of Math and Literacy Resource Teachers. The production of a wide variety

of classroom resource materials resulted from these collaborative activities with the PDU and Core Curriculum Unit colleagues. Principal among these is a “Menu of Instructional Strategies” designed and compiled by the two PIU Literacy Specialists to support and sustain professional development activities by the Literacy Resource Teachers. It is being duplicated and distributed to each LRT in NHP schools. Collaborative work was also conducted by the PIU and PDU in the development of the Annual Workplan for 2000-2001.

**Conduct of the PIU Site-based Technical Assistance Activities for the 2000-2001 School Year.** As described in an earlier section of this report under the Strategic Objective, a monitoring plan was designed and implemented in order to assist the PIU in the supervision of the modified site-based technical support strategy for the new school year as of mid-September. The successful implementation of the strategy is perceived as means of seeking to ensure that there is continuity in the innovative teaching/learning strategies pursued in the project schools. The site-based approach to teacher professional development requires the continued deployment of the 156 resource teachers as a means of institutionalizing process of improved literacy and numeracy. In coordination with the principal at each school, the site-based activities are designed to collaborate with the resource teachers in improving the quality of teaching. Among the other activities being conducted and monitored under the site-based approach are included the provision of systematic feedback to classroom teachers, modeling instructional strategies in reading and mathematics, promoting the use of teacher and student portfolios, across-classroom observations by teachers, and the sharing of effective teaching practices. The observation of teacher and student behaviors has been conducted within the context of the NHP Results Framework. Observation checklists were designed and utilized as instruments for both the purpose of providing systematic feedback to the teachers and principals and recording information for individual school and total project monitoring of site-based technical support. The expected outcomes of this activity which are inclusive of improved quality of teaching are evidenced in classroom teacher explanation and feedback to students, promotion of critical thinking, occurrence of student-formulated questions, and an overall improvement of the learning environment in the classroom teaching-learning situation, among others.

**Identification and Procurement of Supplementary Materials.** The PIU team in collaboration with the J&A Home Office procured exemplary supplementary materials that were approved by the MOEC and placed on hold during the previous school year. A total of over 4000 reading books for grades 1 to 4 costing over US \$ 28,000 were procured and arrived at NHP in December 2000. Due to the austerity budget constraints this could not measure up to the list originally proposed which amount to a total of approximately 30,000 books. The final number received under this order was further reduced because of books that were deemed “out of stock” by the publishers. J&A responded to this challenge, first, by identifying approximately 7,000 “replacement” books for those out of stock, principally grades 4 to 6, and, second, by working closely with the International Book Program (IBP) to receive a donation of 28,000 new books which are also highly applicable to the Jamaican Revised Primary School Curriculum. The IBP donation is estimated to be worth around US \$ 700,000. Plans are underway at the level of each of the 72 project schools for the next wave of activities intended

to procure exemplary materials in support of improved quality of teaching and increased achievement of the targeted children in numeracy and literacy.

**Preparation of a Revised Educational Technology Plan for Approval by the MOEC.** Prior to July 2000, a **Revised Educational Technology Plan** was completed and submitted for concurrence by the Media Services Unit of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Since then the MSU provided a statement of concurrence and the plan was further review at the level of NHP school principals and the regional offices. This final review before seeking approval of the plan by authorities within the central Ministry was undertaken as a result of a recommendation given to the Contractor at the September 2000 meeting of the NHP Joint Steering Committee (JSC) and due to the interests expressed by school principals at the October Principals' Forum. Extensive follow-up work was coordinated by the Project Director and Head of the Media Services Unit to assure that the final version of the ed tech plan to be submitted to the MOEC reflected the well-founded input and general consensus of a wide array of stakeholders. Two key meetings were convened in December 2000 with approximately two dozen stakeholders from across the country, mainly representatives from local New Horizons schools and the regional offices. Included were principal, educational officers, regional directors and resource teachers in addition to MSU and PIU personnel. The major observations and suggestions provided since the September JSC meeting have been woven into the final version of the plan. In summary, there was unanimous consensus among all of the participants in the meetings from September to December 2000. Representatives from the schools and regional offices envision the Multi-media Resource Centers (MMRCs) serving as "hubs" for activities, resources, maintenance/ service, and knowledge in the field of educational technology. In addition to the instructional support role, they perceive the MMRCs as demonstration centers and "portal" site, so to speak, for the production of user-friendly, localized and customized media in the form of audio and video cassettes, computer software, hard copies of reference materials and the like well beyond the life of New Horizons. A broad base of approximately three dozen stakeholders who have been involved in the significant task of revising and further fine-tuning the ed tech plan are excited about the prospects of moving ahead on the activities under this NHP Intervention. J&A submitted the modified **Revised Educational Technology Plan: December 2000** and a detailed cover letter to the Director of Projects as a "Request for Approval of the NHP Revised Educational Technology Plan." Once the Ministry authorities concur with the recommendations set forth by NHP and once notice of approval is received, the next step will be for the Institutional Contractor to submit a contract modification to USAID for its approval. This will require the guidance of the international consultant and local expertise in collaboration with the Media Services Unit in order to implement the plan in a timely, successful manner.

#### **Intermediate Result 4.2: *Increased School Attendance***

**Parental Training Activities.** The institutional contractor collaborated with the National Council on Education (NCE) in contracting a local consultant to implement a training program for seven NHP school clusters. The consultant's scope of work and contract were prepared and approved. In support of the Intermediate Result *Improved School/Parent/Community Involvement*, the NCE hosted a



Presentation Ceremony for “Parents for Parents” Training Program that was held with a pilot study group of parents and other stakeholders. This activity preceded the island-wide implementation of the program. Two four-day workshops to train forty-four parents were conducted under the Parent Education and Training Program. The NCE also assisted Parent Training Coordinators to establish Study Circles in their school communities. The PIU team members participated in some of the training activities conducted by the NCE and helped facilitate the administration and collection of baseline data questionnaires related to PTA standards. Preliminary results of the focus group report were shared with project stakeholders for future decision-making.

**Reported on Status of Breakfast Program in Eight NHP Schools.** The NHP Breakfast Program was in place early in the new school year, operating for 73 days with an average of 430 needy students being served per day in the eight project schools. The Nutrition Specialist produced a **Status Report on Breakfast Programmes** which covers the activities, support and results of the program in each of the schools with NHP financing and technical assistance. Topics described in detail include progress and monitoring data that covers attendance, meals prepared and served, evidence of children benefiting, efficiency of processes employed, parental involvement and fundraising, menu monitoring and use of funds and inventory control. The introduction notes that this is the second term that breakfast has been offered under the New Horizons Project to needy children in these eight schools. Initially, seven of the eight schools commenced with a breakfast program lasting eight weeks. Negril All Age commenced their feeding program on September, thus coming in line with the other seven schools, for a three-month term. Due to the austerity budget in effect throughout the performance award fee period, the services of the Nutrition Specialist were not at the level desired. This was compensated for, in part, by the sustained interest and professional attitude and efforts of the Project Accountant who worked closely with the specialist and school principals, making trips to all the schools in order to assist with financial aspects as well as most of the monitoring activities. Monitoring visits were made to the eight schools twice during the term. The original criteria for the selection of children and the menus were retained. The incoming students at the grade 1 level in each school replaced grade 6 students who left at the end of the previous school year. Areas of concern and for which recommendations are given in the NHP Breakfast Program report include improved record keeping within some schools and increased parental involvement. These two areas were most challenging and are being addressed by the project along with incentive activities designed to improve the attendance and participation of some of the needy children.

#### ***Intermediate Result 4.3: Improved Management of Schools***

**Oriented Principals in the Formulation of Annual Action Plans Based on School Development Plans.** Prior to the School Year 2000-2001, NHP principals were introduced to the philosophy of School Development Teams and the need to involve SDT members in situational analysis of schools and their environments and, as a requirement for inclusion in the project, they were instructed to write School Development Plans incorporating innovative numeracy and literacy programs. By the end of the 1999-2000 School Year, this had been accomplished in great measure. With the start of the new school year, the focus turned to the development of

individual “Action Plans” at each school with greater specificity and indications of well-founded objectives, enabling activities and corresponding resources. During PIU visits to project schools and at the mid-October “Principals’ Forum” instructions and orientation to this process and the quality of the resultant plan were provided. It is intended that early in the on-going period each of the 72 school principals will submit an action plan designed to guide the school in reaching its objectives in numeracy, literacy and in other inter-related areas. The annual action planning is perceived as a means of furthering collaborative decision making at the local level and assuring improved school management on the part of the school principal. Improvement in the quality of NHP School Development Plans and the provision of guidance in implementing them with optimum success remains a concern of the NHP; hence, collaborative efforts with PIU partners from the National Council on Education and Professional Development are deemed as essential in this process. This will need to be accomplished through coordination with appropriate units within the Ministry of Education and Culture.

**Collaboration with the National Council on Education in the Improvement of School Boards.** J&A assisted in the contracting of a local consultant to provide technical assistance in the development of an “Operations Manual on Governance and Leadership for School Boards” under the NCE. The consultant researched relevant reference materials such as the new “Code of Regulations”, resulting in the writing of a manual that provides quick reference materials for school boards. During the report period, the NCE also undertook the development of 18 training modules on seven topics in the area of governance and leadership training. These activities are complementing the others noted here in support of *Improved Management of Schools*.

**Advancement in the Use of Administrative Computers for Improved School Management.** As part of the implementation process for interventions 9 and 10 and as reported on in previous periods, the stage had been set by the contractor to assure that the most suitable procurement of computer equipment was made available to the stakeholders in the field. Computer equipment (a desktop computer, small laser printer and uninterruptible power supply) was procured for each of the 72 NHP schools and three desktop computers and three small laser printers for each of the six Regional Offices. This activity was conducted with the assistance of the subcontractor, IDEAS, Ltd. The hardware and software was successfully procured and installed by the Jamaica Computer Society Education Foundation in all Regional Offices and 66 of the 72 project schools by June 2000. With the obligation of funds adequate to undertake follow-up activities under these two interventions, further advancements were made in the proposed use of these “administrative computers” for improved school management during the report period in question. In December 2000, six EMIS Technician/Trainers, one to be assigned to each of the six Regional Offices, were identified for employment by J&A. This was the culmination of a lengthy process that began in the summer of 2000 with the refinement of the plans for the EMIS-related NHP Interventions and the need to move ahead with this significant activity in spite of the impact of the austerity budget still in effect throughout the period. Detailed scopes of work were drawn up and agreed upon in collaboration with the Planning and Development Unit and EMIS Specialist. In close coordination with representatives from these bodies and each of the six Directors of the Regional Offices, the screening and selection process took place. As a result of a national search, the applications of 16 candidates were

reviewed at both the regional and project level. Seven applicants were short listed and interviewed by a panel using pre-established scoring procedures and the qualifications, role description and responsibilities specified. Final decisions were made before the end of the period and six candidates accepted. Early in the next six-month period of the project, the main focus under these two Interventions will be on the refinement of the customized school management software being developed and the training of the EMIS Technician/Trainers. The training is to focus on the objectives, purposes and functionality of the software which is to be installed in the project schools and used in an on-site training mode to capture all relevant data on the students in the school admissions register and other relevant school records.

## PERFORMANCE

Table 1: SO 4. Increased Literacy and Numeracy Among Targeted Jamaican Youth

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPANTS	PRODUCTS	OUTCOME/RESULTS
<b>1 Developing Innovative Mathematics and Literacy Programs.</b>				
Development of NHP Year Three Workplan	PIU completed annual workplan based on the Life of Project Workplan, Year 2000 project performance and team experiences	PIU Specialists, Project Director and NHP partners, NCE and PDU, in consultation with others in the MOEC	Annual Plan June 2000 – July 2001 * <b>1</b> Annual Plan 2000 – 2001 Budget * <b>2</b> Annual Plan 2000 – 2001 (NHP Partners Version) * <b>3</b>	Comprehensive plans to guide the contractor and partners in project implementation
Collaboration with MOEC in Implementation of Revised Primary Curriculum	PIU provided specialized input to activities including planning, training and guidance to literacy summer camps, on-site use of the curriculum; other “literacy initiatives”	PIU Specialists and Project Director, members of Core Curriculum Unit, PDU Training Coordinator; approx. 750 teachers and 72 NHP principals	Improved lesson plans and instruction in mathematics and literacy as well as other disciplines	All of NHP principals and teachers capable of implementation of the revised curriculum.
Conduct NHP Principals’ Forum	One-day forum on NHP principles, expectations for year, role of principal, and planning for reform	PIU team, NCE, PDU, 63 principals or designated representatives and approx. 20 MOEC Ed Officers	Forum oriented principals to Site-based Technical Assistance Strategy. Principals’ Forum* <b>4</b> and use of PIU designed Classroom Observation Checklists * <b>5</b>	Principals are able to articulate purposes, etc. and intended outcomes for the year, describe their role as leaders in school reform and formulate SDPs in terms of innovative programs
Designed Monitoring Plan for Site-based Technical Assistance Supervision	PIU designed a sound approach to monitoring its site-based activities	PIU Specialists in coordination with MOEC colleagues in CCU & PDU	PIU Site-based Monitoring Plan * <b>6</b> and Report * <b>7</b>	More effective monitoring and site-based training.
Reporting on Status of PIU Site-based Tech Assistance	PIU site-based activities are conducted & reported	PIU; over 120 teachers and 250 principals, VPs & RTs	Status Report on TA * <b>8</b>	More clinical practices and child-centered learning
Development of School-Specific Literacy and Math Programs	Specific innovative action plans developed at the schools by SDTs	PIU advising 72 school principals who guide approx. 650 SDT members	Set of revised SDPs from the 72 NHP schools * <b>9</b> (In progress)	Revised SDPs in the form of annual “Action Plans” guide STDs, PIU, et al.

Table 2: IR 4.1 Improved Teacher Quality

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPANTS	PRODUCTS	OUTCOME/RESULTS
<b>2</b> <b>In-service Teacher Training in Reading and Mathematics</b>  Conduct PIU Site-based Technical Assistance	See Table 1 above			
<b>6</b> <b>Supplementary Reading and Mathematics Materials</b>  Identification and Procurement of Supplementary Materials	MOEC- and USAID-approved exemplary materials procured and arrived for distribution and donations in process	PIU, USAID, MOEC, J&A Home Office and the International Book Program (IBP)	Over 4000 reading books for 1-4 Grades * <b>10</b> and forthcoming donation of 28,000 new books, 1-6 Grades * <b>11</b>	Eventual provision of additional learning opportunities to NHP students
<b>7</b> <b>Educational Technology</b>  Preparation of Revised Educational Technology Plan for MOEC Approval	Followed principal and Joint Steering Committee recommendations by further reviewing NHP Ed Tech Plan and forwarding for MOEC approval	Project Director, Media Service Unit Head, over 35 other stakeholders such as Principals, Regional TEOs, Directors, and Resource Teachers	Revised Educational Technology Plan: December 2000 * <b>12</b>	Proposed guidelines for decisions on appropriate technology mixes for NHP schools and eventual improved quality of teaching and learning
<b>8</b> <b>Training Literacy and Mathematics Resource Teacher</b>  Collaboration in Training Resource Teachers	Assistance to the PDU in preparing and conducting training workshops for “Facilitators”, Literacy and Math Resource Teachers	PIU, CCU, PDU and 24 Facilitators and 127 Math and Literacy Resource Teachers	Resource materials, e.g. PIU Specialists compiled “Menu of Instructional Strategies” * <b>13</b>	Support for teacher implementation of innovations and staff professional development

Table 3: IR 4.2 Increased School Attendance

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPANTS	PRODUCTS	OUTCOME/RESULTS
<b>5</b> <b>Health and Nutrition</b> Implementation of and Report on Breakfast Program in Select Schools	Breakfast Program initiated for new year in eight NHP schools, including PIU guidance, monitoring of attendance, meals prepared and served, finances and other aspects. Specialist completed status report for period.	Eight participating schools, Health and Nutrition Specialist, Project Accountant, Parent-School Committee Members and 430 Children	Individual School Menus, Meals, Financial Reports and New Horizons “Status Report on Breakfast Programmes” * <b>14</b>	Participation of needy students in program and school learning activities with increased attendance and eventual improved achievement
<b>4</b> <b>Parent Education and Training</b> Collaboration with National Council on Education Conducted Parent Training Activities	J&A collaborated with the NCE in contracting local consultant to implement training program in seven NHP school clusters. PIU participated in some workshops and facilitated collection of baseline data for NCE	Local Consultant, NCE Executive Director and Project Implementation Officer, PIU and PDU guests participants at workshops, PIU Accountant, other stakeholders and 44 Parents	No contractor products	Parent Training Coordinators are guided as to the establishment of Study Circles

Table 4: IR 4.3 Improved Management of Schools

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPANTS	PRODUCTS	OUTCOME/RESULTS
<b>3</b> <b>Providing Governance and Leadership Training for Schools, Communities and Parents</b>	<p>(A description of the major NCE core activities, products and outcomes/ results during the report period is available.)</p> <p>The Principals' Forum on planning, school reform and leadership and related activities are in Table 1.</p>			
Orientation of Principals to the Formulation of Action Plans Based on School Development Plans	Project Director and PIU Specialists provide instructions and guidance in the preparation of an individual school "Action Plan" as offshoot of SDP	All 72 NHP principals, PIU members, MRTs, LRTs, and School Development Teams.	Year 2000 Action Plans for all NHP schools (in progress)	Eventual improvement of overall NHP school effectiveness and, specifically, math and reading instructional programs.
Collaboration with NCE in School Board Improvement	J&A assisted in contracting consultant to develop manual	NCE staff, Project Accountant, Consultant	No contractor products. (In progress NCE produced "Operations Manual on Governance and Leadership of School Boards" and 18 modules on 7 topics on Governance and Leadership Training)	Provision of efficient and accurate references and training materials for School Boards.
<b>9</b> <b>Integrating Databases and</b>				
<b>10</b> <b>Linking Schools with the Jamaican Regional and National EMIS Network</b>	J&A conducts the search and selection of EMIS Technician/Trainers for proposed installation of customized school management software, on-site training and data collection and entry in each project school	EMIS Specialist, Project Director, NCE and PIU representatives, Planning Unit, Regional Directors	Six EMIS Technician/ Trainers Selected and "EMIS Technician/ Trainers Resource Notebook" prepared * <b>15</b>	Support for the improvement of school management and decision making after installation of software and training. Eventual modernized and efficient management system functioning.
Advancement in Use of Administrative Computers for Improved School Management				

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- **Obligation of funds.** During the fifth report period, the uncertainties surrounding the timing of the obligation of funds continued to be the most challenging problem encountered by the contractor. This difficulty extends back slightly over one year from the time there occurred a “temporary shortfall” in project funding. This resulted in reduction of effort, a cutback on supplementary materials, limits to the contracting of consultants, and delay in study tour plans. While the relatively low-cost site-based training in the form of clinical supervisory practices, demonstration teaching, “in-house” workshops in NHP schools and other approaches were not noticeably influenced during the First Term of the 2000-2001 School Year, the “clouds” surrounding the austerity budget and delays in the notices on funding obligations influenced the decision making and flow of activities. During the period, it was difficult to move ahead on expenditures in the areas of supplementary materials acquisitions in mathematics and reading at the desired pace and the educational technology activities were confined to the fine-tuning of the plans. Once obligations were made available to the contractor, progress was evident in areas such as preparation of customized school management software that is to be installed at project sites early in the next six-month period. Actions taken to resolve the funding situation included efforts by the COP to work even more closely with the Project Accountant and the J&A Home Office so as to more prudently direct funds to where they would result in optimal impact. The J&A Officer in Charge also made a trip to Jamaica principally to consult with the USAID CTO so as to program existing funds and address the timing and magnitude of intervention efforts.
- **Limited responsiveness of some principals to school development planning requirements and others.** As noted in previous reports, the area of school development planning required a great deal more effort on the part of the PIU than originally anticipated. Actions taken to correct this included, among others, school development planning as part of the principals’ annual workshops and support at the level of individual schools during school visitations. While progress was noted in the area of SDPs in most project schools during the immediate past report period, there appears to exist a problem with a number of NHP principals in completing the required annual review of SDPs and update (recommended in the form of an “action plan”) for the new school year. Some of these same principals have failed to complete simple reporting tasks such as Termly Reports in a timely manner. The PIU is addressing this difficulty on a school-by-school basis. The monitoring plan designed to assist the NHP team to more effectively supervise the implementation of its site-based technical assistance activities is providing a means of assuring a better response to this problem as well. The COP has recommended that the NCE, in concert with the PDU and others, conduct a project-wide forum and help orchestrate follow-up activities in the area of school development planning. A SDP training module has been suggested. The Project Director and PIU Specialists are encouraging completion of these minimal requirements and guiding school principals and members of the School Development Teams, as deemed appropriate. The long-term solution to the overall problem on lack of responsiveness by some schools and the need for improved planning and leadership will, of course, require a system-wide solution that addresses both principal recruitment and professional development.



## STATEMENT OF WORK

At the close of the report period, December 2000, circumstances that influenced the projected rate of accomplishment of New Horizons for Primary Schools appeared to be ready to change at least in the area of the obligation of funds. The austerity budget in existence over the last two periods, or approximately 12 months, will be replaced by one that will permit a much higher level of effort in the high-cost areas. In particular, the shortfall in funding that impacted activities, for example, under Intervention 6 (Supplementary Materials in Reading and Mathematics), 7 (Educational Technology) and Intervention 10 (Linking Schools with Jamaican Regional and National EMIS Network) is projected to improve because of the assurances of increased obligations and the lifting of the “clouds” of uncertainty referred to in the section immediately above. It is the hope of the Project Implementation Unit that the Year Three Annual Workplan will have to go back to the drawing board in order to incorporate additional activities in each of the Interventions cited. As a result, the next wave of books could be finalized based on the recommended materials being forwarded from the School Development Teams of each school. In the area of educational technology, more detailed plans and a well-founded budget will have to accompany the anticipated contract modification corresponding to the Revised Educational Technology Plan elaborated over the past several months. It is also foreseen that there will be the need to contract international and local advisors, especially in the field of educational technology. One or more follow-up trips by the EMIS Specialist are anticipated in order to assure that the customized school management software is obtaining the expected results and that the training and other activities are back on target. The Formative Evaluation Team is expected in country in May 2001 so as to conduct annual project performance evaluation activities in a representative sample of project schools in accordance with the Performance Monitoring Plan. Based on the status reports to be completed during the current school year, the breakfast programs will be reviewed and revised plans are expected so as to provide the required level of funding on a school-by-school basis. The scope of work for the local Health and Nutrition Specialist will need to be reviewed and modified on the basis of school needs and anticipated funding. The PIU designed site-based training activities and being conducted at the time of writing this semi-annual report will continue for the remainder of the 2000-2001 school year.

In the months ahead, the contractor, both in the field and at the Home Office, will continue to weigh the limitations, constraints, and difficulties encountered in a cooperative and constructive manner, recognizing the extensive material and human resources available at all levels in this collaborative effort to improve student achievement in literacy and numeracy in the targeted schools. The focus will be in line with the principles of the project and the strategic objectives set before us. We were all able to make significant strides forward during the austerity budget period now in its final stage, and it is anticipated that much greater effort and progress are on the horizon for the next period and beyond.

## **APPENDIX**

- **Reference List: Products/Deliverables**
- **Semi-Annual Financial Status Report**

**Reference List: Products/Deliverables** (Cited in the Performance Charts Section)

1. New Horizons for Primary Schools Annual Plan 2000 – 2001 (August 2000)
2. New Horizons for Primary Schools Annual Plan 2000 – 2001 Budget (September 2000)
3. New Horizons for Primary Schools Annual Plan June 2000 – July 2001(NHP Partners’ Version, September 2000)
4. Principals’ Forum (December 2000)
5. NHP Observation Checklist (Blue Form) and NHP Observation Checklist (Yellow Form) (August 2000)
6. PIU Site-based Monitoring Plan
7. The Design and Implementation of a Monitoring Plan to Assist in the Supervision of the PIU Site-based Technical Support Strategy (December 2000)
8. Status Report on the Implementation of the PIU Site-based Technical Assistance Support (December 2000)
9. File on the NHP School Development Plans updated as “Action Plans 2000-2001” (In progress)
10. A list of the thirty two titles is available for review as are the books at the NHP Office at the MOEC, Caenwood
11. A list of the thirteen titles is available for review as are the books at the NHP Office at the MOEC, Caenwood
12. Revised Educational Technology Plan: December 2000
13. Menu of Instructional Strategies (September 2000)
14. Status Report on Breakfast Programme (December 2000)
15. EMIS Technician/Trainers’ Resource Notebook (December 2000)

